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Mission Memories

The Franciscan Missions
of California

1903—Fourth Edition
Photographs by Vroman, Pasadena
Engravings and Printing by
Out West Company, Los Angeles, Cal.

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REFERENCE

ISSION history in California will always be of interest to the resident, as well as to the "tourist," who is with us but a few weeks; but the neglected condition of nearly all of the Franciscan Missions at the present time will give them but a few years of life unless heroic measures are taken toward their preservation.

The Landmarks Club of Southern California, and other organizations are doing good, but they are hampered by a lack of funds. The preservation of these old landmarks should be a State work, and a fund be provided at the earliest possible moment to protect them from utter ruin. That the State should undertake their preservation we believe to be the wish of thousands of her citizens. San Rafael and Santa Cruz have been completely effaced, not even a foundation remaining; others, like San José, Soledad, Santa Margarita, and old Purissima, a few walls still mark the spot where they once stood; but the new century will look on nothing but a heap of broken tiles and adobe.

San Antonio (one of the most interesting of all the Missions, certainly the most interesting north of Santa Barbara), Purissima, Sonoma, and San Diego, may as well have their obituaries ready. Two or three winters' storms on their roofless walls and they will fall, never to be restored; then a few years longer and they will be with the first two mentioned, lost even to location.

Santa Clara has been remodeled until it is lost, except portions of the interior of the chapel.

Dolores, San Carlos (Carmel), San Juan Bautista, San Miguel, San Luis Obispo, Santa Ynez, Santa Barbara, San Buena Ventura, San Gabriel, San Luis Rey, and Pala (what portions remain) are cared for by the Catholic church, with priests in charge, but several are in sad need of repairs.

San Juan Capistrano and San Fernando have received attention and repairs at the hands of the Landmarks Club, and will stand as they are for many years.

It has been the desire to secure as representative a series of photographs of the Missions, as they are today, as possible, and with this in view two hundred negatives have been made during the past year, of some but one negative, of others as many as twenty, from points that best show their location and condition. Interiors especially have been desired, where the walls still admit; and from these negatives plates have been made for this work.

If its publication will in any manner aid interest in the preservation of these historical landmarks, its object will have been accomplished.

It is not the intention to make this a guide book, but as the exact location of some of the Mission, cannot be ascertained by strangers just when desired, a few words may not be out of place, locating each Mission from nearest station, or better way of conveyance.

Starting in at the southernmost we first find San Diego Mission in Mission valley, six miles from city of San Diego, via "Old Town," a very pleasant drive, returning via Bluff road.

San Luis Rey.

Situated in the beautiful San Luis valley, four miles from Oceanside, a station on the Southern California (Santa Fé) railway, 85 miles south of Los Angeles.

Pala.

Twenty miles further up the San Luis valley, 24 miles from Oceanside. (A stop going or returning should be made at Guajome Ranch, about five miles on the way from San Luis Rey. This is the most typical old Spanish home in Southern California, the ranch that Mrs. Jackson first intended to describe as the home of Ramona, but later used Camulos Ranch.)

Carriages can be had at Oceanside for the trip.

San Juan Capistrano.

Mission is but a stone-throw from the station of Capistrano, on the Southern California railway.

San Gabriel.

Seven miles from Los Angeles, or four from Pasadena, on Southern Pacific railway, or reached by carriage from either place.

San Buena Ventura.

In the city of Ventura, a station on Southern Pacific railway, Santa Barbara line, 83 miles northwest from Los Angeles. Mission is about a mile from the station, in the heart of the city. Street cars to door.

San Miguel.

But a few rods from station of same name on Southern Pacific railway, Coast Line.

San Antonio.

About 40 miles northwest from San Miguel and twelve inland west from King City, a station on Southern Pacific railway, Coast Line. (One of the most interesting of all the Missions, and should not be overlooked, as it will stand but a few years longer unless repaired.)

Soledad.

About three miles west from station of same name on Southern Pacific railway, Coast Line.

San Carlos Boromeo (or Carmel).

The Old Mission Church at Monterey, erected in 1804, is sometimes called San Carlos; indeed the Father at present in charge calls this church "San Carlos"; and Carmel Mission (lately restored), about six miles southeast from Monterey in Carmel valley, as the Carmel Mission. They both properly belong to "San Carlos Boromeo del Carmello." Father Junípero always disliked the Presidio and Mission in close proximity to each other, and shortly after San Carlos was founded near the Presidio he moved the Mission proper to the Carmel river, and later the church, now called San Carlos, was built to accommodate the residents of Monterey, which had become a place of importance.

San Juan Bautista.

In village of San Juan, 20 miles through beautiful valleys and over mountains from Salinas City, or from Sargents or Hollister stations on Southern Pacific railway, or stage from Chittenden five miles. San Juan is a beautifully located little village, and the Mission is in a good state of repair, the best north of Santa Barbara.

San Jose.

One and a half miles from Irvington, a station on Niles branch of Southern Pacific railway, 13 miles from San José. But little is left of the Mission.

San Fernando.

One-half mile from station of Fernando on Southern Pacific railway, 21 miles north of Los Angeles.

Santa Barbara.

In the city of same name, on line of Southern Pacific railway, about two miles from P. O. Street cars almost to door.

Santa Ynez.

About three miles west of village of Santa Ynez, over Santa Ynez mountains, 30 miles from Santa Barbara, or eight miles south of Los Olivos station, on Pacific Coast railway running between Port Harford, San Luis Obispo, Los Olivos and Purissima.

Purissima.

About 25 miles west of Santa Ynez or Los Olivos and 12 miles from Los Alamos, a station on above railway, or three miles east from Lompoc, a stopping port for Pacific Coast steamships.

On completion of the Southern Pacific Coast Line with Santa Barbara, Purissima will be much easier reached than at present.

Old Purissima.

Is just at outskirts of Lompoc, but is nearly all gone. The earthquake crack, however, still shows.

San Luis Obispo.

In city of same name, directly in heart of city. Reached by Southern Pacific railway, Coast Line, or Pacific Coast steamers and railway. From Port Harford 10 miles.

Santa Margarita.

Half-mile west from station of same name on Southern Pacific railway, Coast Line. (A party asking for its location will probably be told that no Mission or old church ever existed about there, but it is there in ruins, however.

Santa Cruz.

"Close in" city of same name, no trace of original mission remains.

Santa Clara.

Now the chapel of Santa Clara College, in city of Santa Clara, four miles from San José.

Dolores.

About three miles from Market street, city of San Francisco. Several street-car lines pass close by.

San Rafael.

Stood in what is now the city of San Rafael. Two pear trees are all that remain to mark the site of this struggling mission.

Sonoma.

In city of same name, 43 miles north of San Francisco, on the San Francisco & Northern Pacific railway.

A delightful way to see the Missions is to drive the entire distance from San Diego to San Francisco, or vice versa, camping en route if you wish. In fact this is preferable when one has health and strength, especially south of King City, where beautiful camping places can be found almost anywhere, to San Diego. In the Salinas valley the wind blows after 11 o'clock until sunset so hard it is unpleasant driving; one might, however, start early in the morning and "tie up" at noon. One should start as early in spring as possible after the rains are quite certain to have ceased — from the 15th to last of April. The writer and companion left Santa Barbara May 15th and reached San Francisco June 1st, and no more enjoyable driving trip can be found than this. Camping under old live-oaks, with hanging moss waving as a silver sheen in the moonlight, will long be remembered, and we felt inclined to lengthen our stop. If one could spend a month between Santa Barbara and San Francisco they would be the better for the living out of doors; three weeks below Santa Barbara would be just as delightful to those who enjoy nature, as nature is.

Map showing Franciscan Missions of California

The Old
Date
Palms
1769

Mission San Diego de Alcalá

Founded
1769

South
Facade

Founded
1798

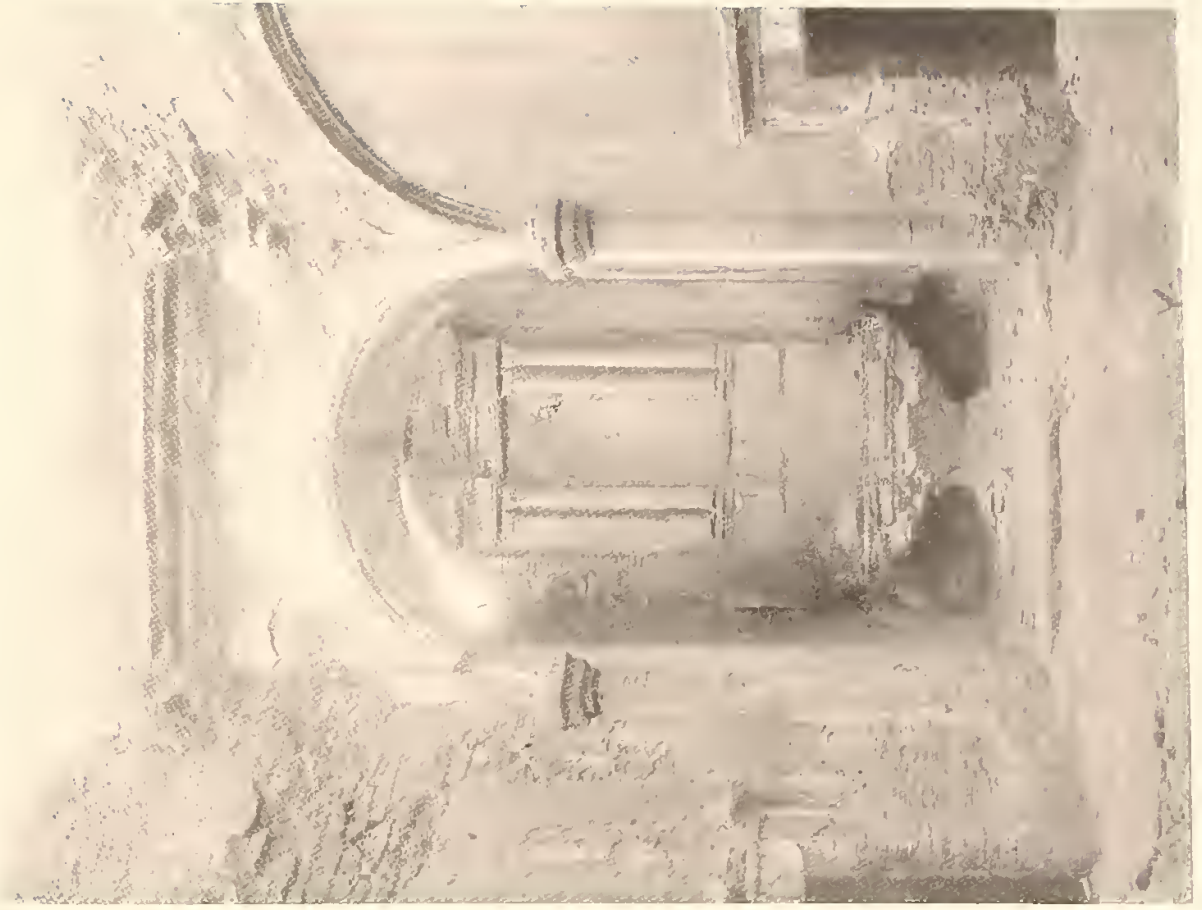
Returned
Franciscans

Mission San Luis Rey

From
the
Northeast

Main
Altar

East Side
and
Cemetery



The Old
Baptistry

General
View from
Southwest

The Fathers and Brothers now at the Mission

Mission San Antonio de Pala

Founded
1816

Interior
of
Chapel

Discarded
Saints

Through
the Large
Arch
&
Founded
1776

Bells and
Front
Court

Ruins of
Dome
and
Bell-tower

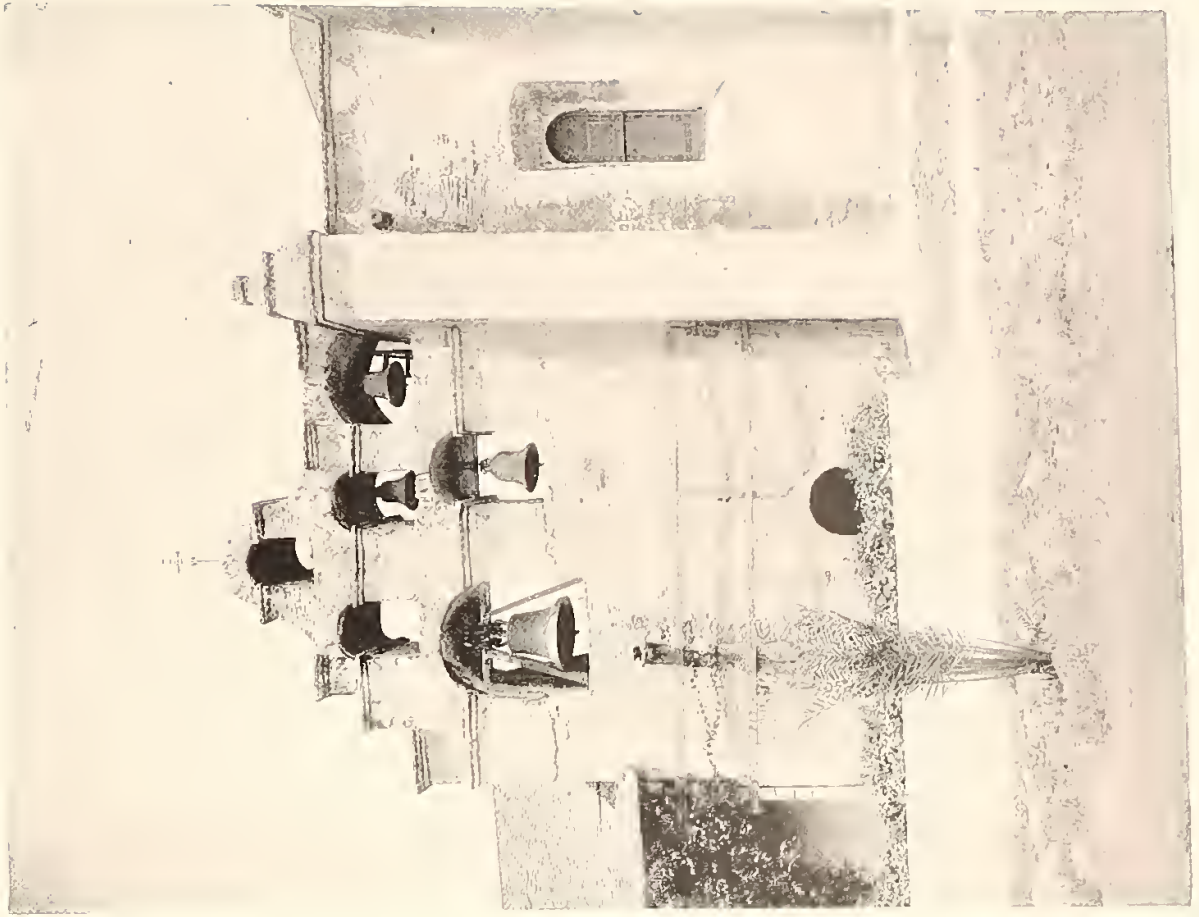
Front
Corridors

The Bells
from
the Rear

Father Okeef

Front Corridors

Bells and South Side



Mission
Bells

Mission San Gabriel Arcangel

East End

&

Founded

1771

A Few
Discarded
Saints

Mission San Buenaventura

Founded
1872

General View from Hill

Founded 1782

East Side
Court

Interior of
Chapel

From
Southwest

Interior

General
View from
Northeast

Through
Front
Corridors

Chapel
Entrance

South Side
Chapel

Ruins
Interior
of
Chapel

From the
Roof

Mission San Carlos Boromeo, Monterey

Mission Carmel

Mission Carmel (Monterey)

Interior

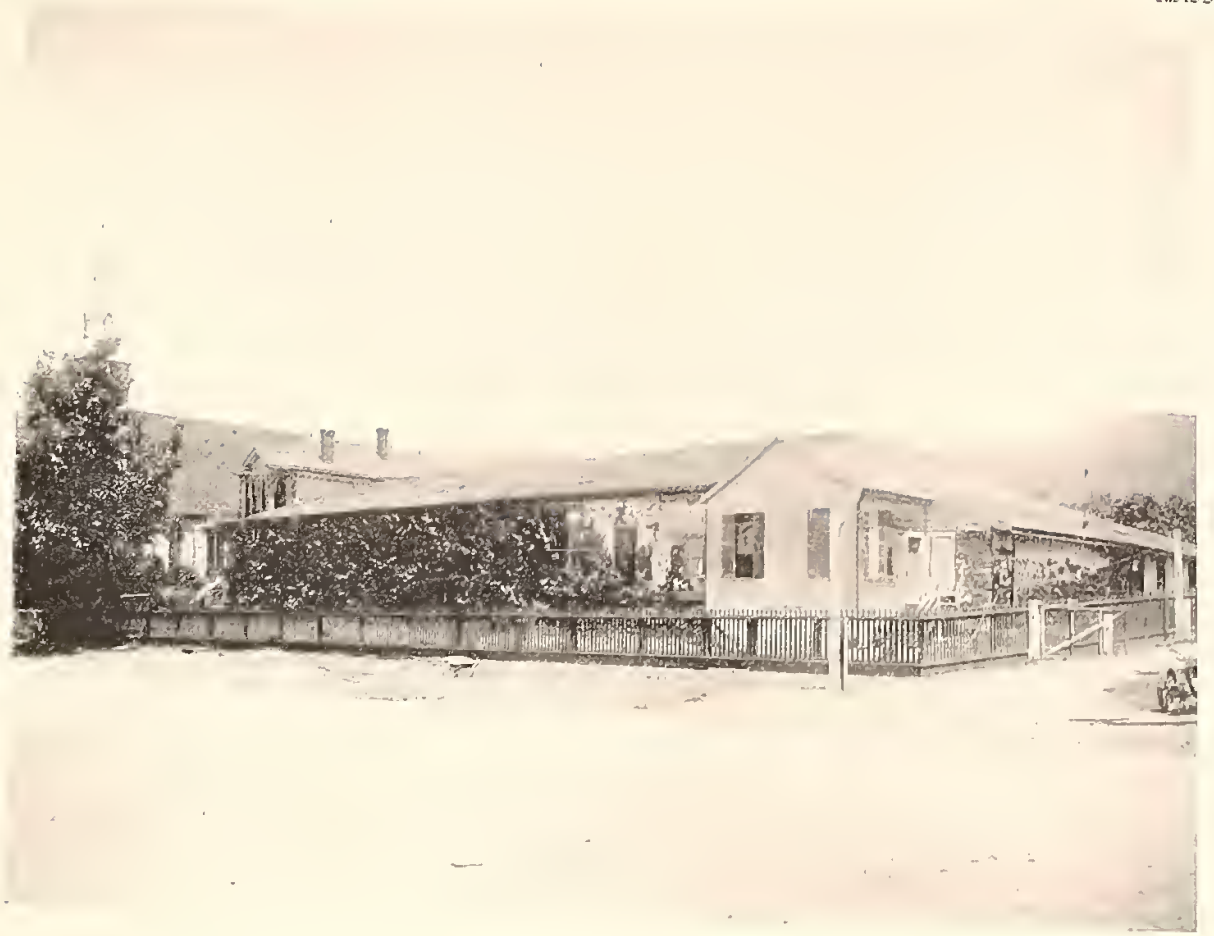
Mission San Juan Bautista

Interior

Under
the
Corridors

East Side
Chapel

Old
Vestments



South
Front

Old
Stone
Fountain

Interior
Old
Chapel

Along
Court
Corridors
to Old
Chapel

The Old
Olive
Walk

General
View
from
South

Old
Fountain
and
South Front
of
Founded
1786

Interior
Main
Chapel

Mission Santa Barbara

Founded
1786

Corridors of Inner Court

&

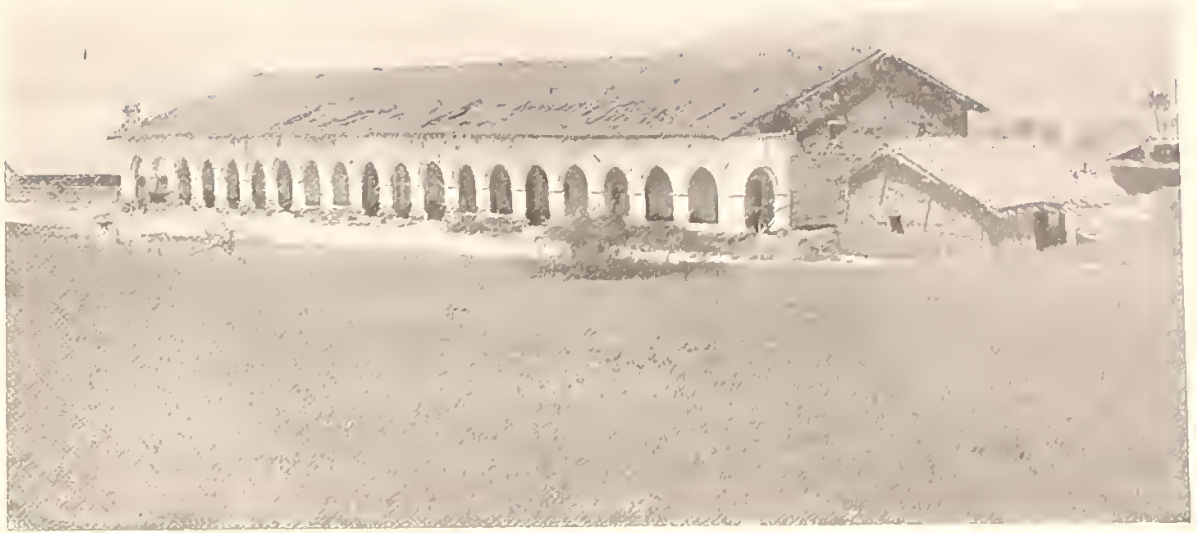
Father Reynarius

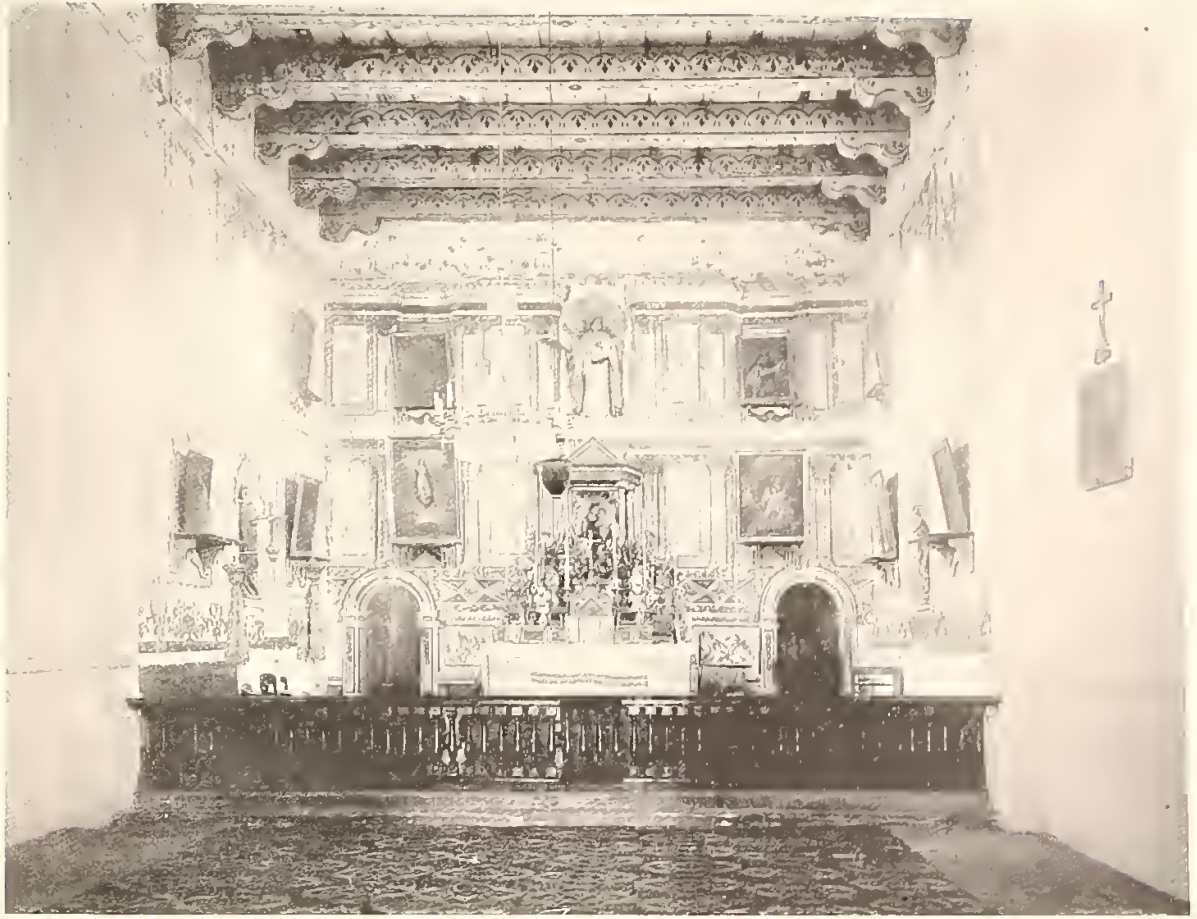
Fountain
and
Inner
Court

Front
Corridor

Crucifix
Cemetery

Main
Building
&
Founded
1797





Main
Altar

Corridors of
Inner
Court

Cemetery
and
East Side
of
Chapel
&
3000
Indians
buried here

After Removal from Old Purissima

Under
Corridors

Ruins
Showing
Earthquake
Crack as
passed
through
Mission

Mission San Luis Obispo

Interior

Ruined
Walls

Ruins

Camp
Under the
Moss-
covered
Oaks

Mission Santa Cruz

From an Old Painting

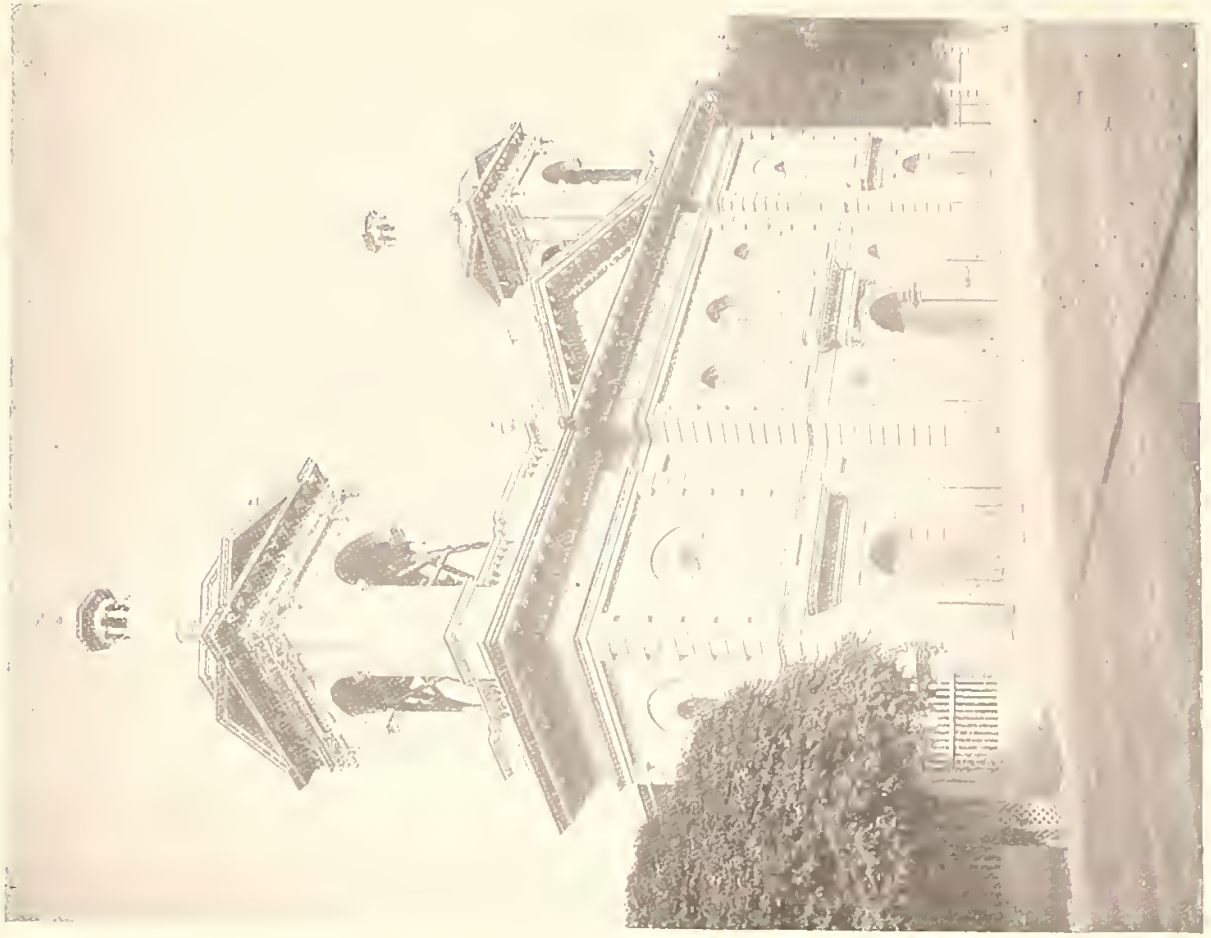
There is nothing whatever left of the Mission

Original Church entirely gone

Building at left is Second Church erected about 1850

Building at right is New Church recently completed; stands on site of Original Mission

Mission Santa Clara (Remodeled)



The original Chapel Walls covered

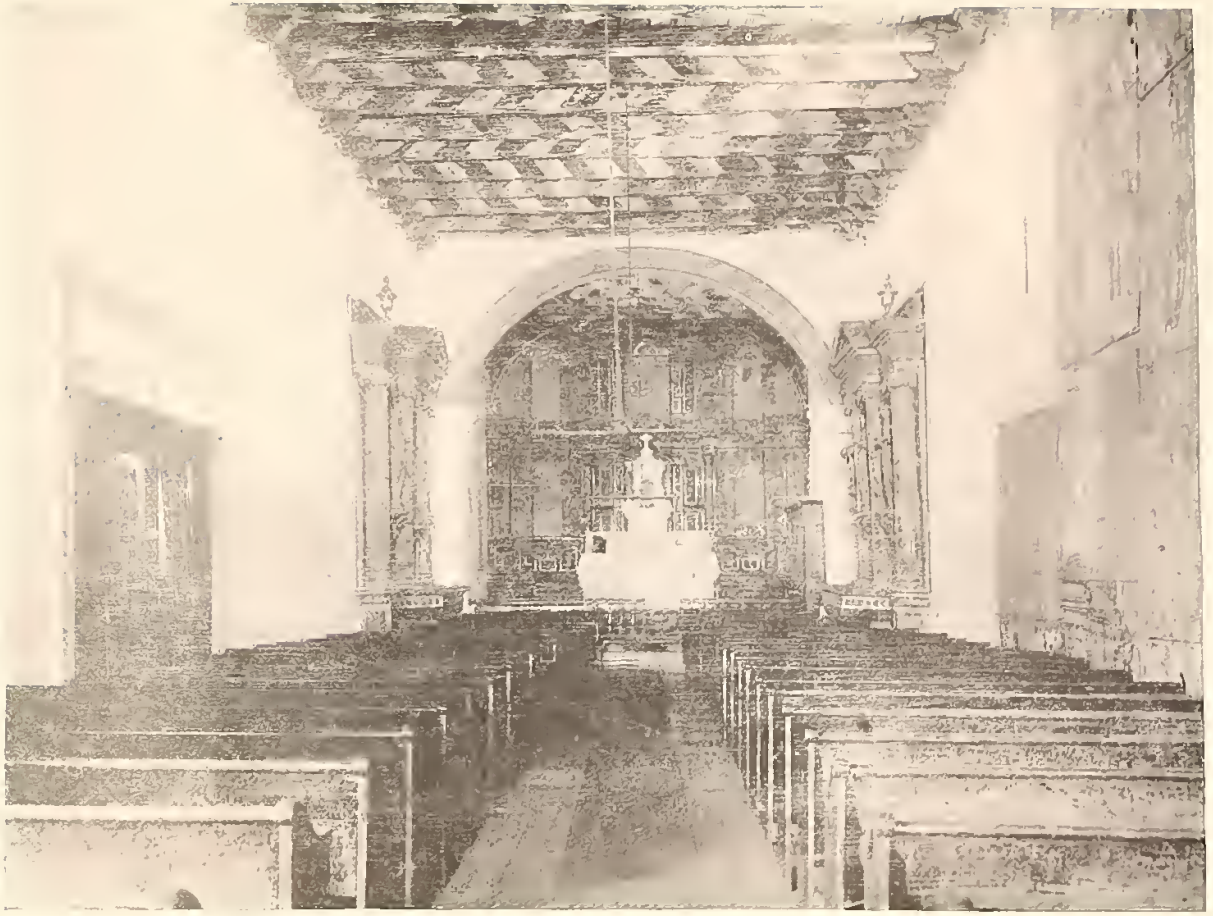
Altar

&

Original

Ceiling

Mission Dolores (San Francisco)



Interior
of
Chapel

Mission Solano (Sonoma)